

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 16957 200333Z

13-12

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02

SCA-01 IO-10 /070 W

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R 191030Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2932

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 16957

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

REF: NEW DELHI 16767

1. WE NOTED IN REFTEL THAT FORMER FONMIN DINESH SINGH HAD MURMURED THAT HE THOUGHT THERE WAS A POSSIBILITY THAT MRS. GANDHI MIGHT RELEASE DETAINED POLITICAL LEADERS SHORTLY AFTER THE NEW YEAR BEGAN. THERE WAS A RUMOR EARLIER THIS WEEK THAT CONGRESS (O) PRESIDENT ASHOK MEHTA HAD BEEN RELEASED, BUT IN FACT MEHTA HAD ONLY BEEN OFFERED A RELEASE ON PAROLE WHICH HE HAD DECLINED. BIJU PATNAIK'S SON TELLS US THAT HIS FATHER THOUGHT THE POLITICAL DETAINEES MIGHT BE RELEASED SOON AFTER JAN, 1 BUT OFFERED NO REASONS FOR THIS BELIEF. WIFE OF MP PILOO MODY TELLS US SHE HAS NO HINT THAT HER HUSBAND WILL BE RELEASED SOON AND LAWYER FOR SEVERAL OF THE DETAINED POLITICIANS ALSO SAYS HE HAS HEARD NO SUCH REPORTS.

2. NEVERTHELESS THE RUMORS STILL PERSIST, ONE LEANS ON THE EXPECTATION THAT VINOBE BHAVE, WHO WILL BREAK A YEAR-LONG FAST ON DEC 25, WILL APPEAL TO MS. GANDHI TO RELEASE THE

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POLITICIANS. THE RUMOR ASSUMES THAT MS. GANDHI WILL ATTEND

THE SARVODHYAYA GATHERING THAT DAY AND GRACIOUSLY GRANT
VINOBE'S REQUEST, THEREBY GATHERING MUCH MORAL MERIT.

3. THE ARREST THIS WEEK OF MP MOHAN DHARIA DOESN'T HELP
THE ABOVE THEORIZING. NOR DOES OUR INFORMATION THAT
SANJAY GANDHI CONTINUES TO ARGUE STRONGLY IN THE "HOUSEHOLD"
AGAINST ANY RELAXATION OF THE EMERGENCY, THE RELEASE OF
PRISONERS, OR ANY SLACKENING OF GOI VIGILANCE AGAINST THE
OPPOSITION. NEVERTHELESS, WE CALL YOUR ATTENTION TO THE
POSSIBILITY THAT MRS. GANCHI WILL DO THE UNEXPECTED--AS
SHE HAS IN THE PAST.
SAXBE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL PRISONERS, PRISONERS RELEASE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975NEWDE16957
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750443-0306
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751224/aaaaaupr.tel
Line Count: 73
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 NEW DELHI 16767
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 AUG 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <26 NOV 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS
TAGS: PINT, IN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006